

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
FOR

Project AC-NH-060-BC 002)  
H513701C  
Grand Avenue (US-60)  
27<sup>TH</sup> avenue/Thomas Road

The FHWA has determined that this project will not have any significant impact on the human environment. This Finding of NO Significant Impact is based on the attached Environmental Assessment which has been independently evaluated by the FHWA and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the environmental issues and impacts of the proposed project. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The FHWA takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached Environmental Assessment.

June 28, 2001

Date

*for*   
Division Administrator

Arizona Department of Transportation  
Intermodal Transportation Division  
Environmental Planning Group  
205 South 17th Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

## **Final Environmental Assessment**


for

### **GRAND AVENUE (US 60) 27<sup>TH</sup> AVENUE/THOMAS ROAD**

Maricopa County, Arizona  
Project No. AC-NH-060-B-(2)  
TRACS No. 060 MA 160 H5137 01C

Approved

by:

  
RICHARD M. DUARTE, Manager  
Environmental Planning Group  
Arizona Department of Transportation

On:

6/26/01

*This environmental assessment has been prepared in accordance with provisions and requirements of Chapter 1, Title 23 USC, 23 CFR Part 771, relating to the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Errata Introduction .....	1
II. Summary of Mitigation Measures .....	2
III. Errata From the Draft Environmental Assessment .....	6

## APPENDICES

Appendix A. Agency Response Letters .....	A-1
Appendix B. List of Preparers and Contributors .....	B-1

## **I. ERRATA INTRODUCTION**

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The Draft Environmental Assessment (DEA) for this project was completed and approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) on April 9, 2001. The DEA evaluates the social, economic, and environmental impacts associated with the implementation of the Grand Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road project proposed by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT). A public hearing was held on April 26, 2001, at the Bostrom Alternative Center Cafeteria located at 3535 North 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona, to obtain comments from the public on the proposed project and on the contents of the DEA. The 30-day comment period ended on May 11, 2001.

The purpose of this Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) is to respond to any comments received during the 30-day public and agency review period, and to provide additions and changes to the DEA where necessary. The FEA includes the list of mitigation measures to be included in the final design specifications, errata from the DEA, a summary of the public hearing and ADOT's responses to public comments, and agency letters received during the 30-day comment period. With the completion of this FEA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements have been met for the proposed improvements to the Grand Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road intersection.

## II. SUMMARY OF MITIGATION MEASURES

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The following mitigation measures were presented in the DEA and are listed here in their final version. These mitigation measures will be implemented by ADOT by incorporating them into the proposed project construction documents. Any changes to these measures have been completed in response to the comments made on the DEA. These mitigation measures supercede any of those identified in the DEA. The following mitigation measures and commitments are not subject to change or modification without the prior written approval of FHWA.

### ADOT Environmental Planning Group Responsibilities:

1. ADOT will complete a full Phase I Site Assessment for hazardous materials prior to right-of-way acquisition of any sites identified in the Preliminary Initial Site Assessment that require further evaluation. (Refer to DEA page 49.)

### ADOT Design Responsibilities:

1. Details of the parking space replacement mitigation and access changes to Burger King (2710 Northwest Grand Avenue) and Universal Technical Institute (3002 North 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue) will be evaluated and made available during the final project design phase. (Refer to DEA page 18.)
2. The portions of Grand Avenue not used as utility access corridors will be removed and landscaped. (Refer to DEA page 21.)
3. Street lighting will be designed to City of Phoenix standards. (Refer to DEA page 21.)
4. ADOT will coordinate with Regional Public Transit Authority during final project design to establish temporary bus stops during construction and to evaluate potential new bus stop locations. (Refer to DEA page 26.)
5. ADOT will construct a 7-foot-high noise wall along the northern side of the Grand Avenue grade-separation structure. This wall will be constructed along the entire length of the mainline structure for an approximate length of 2,000 feet. ADOT will also construct an 8-foot wall south of and parallel to Verde Lane within the proposed ADOT right-of-way. (Refer to DEA page 44.)

6. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared by the designer prior to construction. (Refer to page 18 of this document.)

#### ADOT Roadside Development Section Responsibilities:

1. All embankment slopes, detention basins, and affected public right-of-way will be landscaped with low-water-use plants and the area covered with decomposed granite as regulated in the Phoenix Active Management Area. Trees will be planted along detention basins to screen the facilities from motorists' views. (Refer to DEA page 47.)

#### ADOT District Construction Responsibilities:

1. Because 5 or more acres of land will be disturbed, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit will be required. The District Construction Office will submit the Notice of Intent and the Notice of Termination to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and copies to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. (Refer to DEA page 48.)

#### Contractor's Responsibilities:

1. The contractor shall provide notice to utility customers prior to any disruption of service. (Refer to DEA page 20.)
2. Closures along Grand Avenue, Thomas Road, and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue shall occur at night or during weekend hours. (Refer to DEA page 20.)
3. The contractor shall notify the local residents, property owners, and local businesses at least 14 days prior to any ground-disturbing activities. (Refer to DEA page 27.)
4. The contractor shall adhere to Maricopa Rule 310 and 360 regarding fugitive dust emissions and new source performance standards, respectively, during construction. (Refer to DEA page 39.)
5. The contractor shall be responsible for obtaining any necessary asbestos permits for demolition of any structures done by the contractor. (Refer to DEA page 40.)

6. Any detours necessary during construction, especially during the winter months, shall avoid the air quality monitor located on the northwest corner of the Grand Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road intersection. (Refer to DEA page 40.)
7. In compliance with Executive Order 13112 regarding invasive species, all earth-moving and hauling equipment shall be washed at their storage facility prior to arriving on site to prevent the introduction of invasive species seed. (Refer to DEA page 45.)
8. Because 5 or more acres of land will be disturbed, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit will be required. The contractor shall submit the Notice of Intent and the Notice of Termination to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and copies to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. (Refer to DEA page 48.)

Standard Specifications Included as Mitigation Measures:

1. According to *Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 107 Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public (2000 Edition) (Stored Specification 107.05 Archaeological Features) If previously unidentified cultural resources are encountered during activity related to the construction of the project, the contractor shall stop work immediately at that location and shall take all reasonable steps to secure the preservation of those resources and notify the ADOT Engineer. The Engineer will contact the Environmental Planning Group immediately and make arrangements for the proper treatment of those resources. ADOT will, in turn, notify the appropriate agency(ies) to evaluate the significance of the resource. (Refer to DEA page 37.)
2. According to *Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 107 Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public (2000 Edition) (Stored Specification 107HAZMT, 01/15/93), if previously unidentified or suspected hazardous materials are encountered during construction, work will cease at that location and the ADOT Engineer shall be contacted to arrange for proper assessment, treatment, or disposal of those materials. Such locations will be investigated and proper action implemented prior to the continuation of work in that location. (Refer to DEA page 49.)
3. During construction, the contractor shall give special attention to the effect of its operations upon the landscape and shall take special care to maintain natural surroundings undamaged in accordance with *Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 104.09 (2000 Edition) and the Water Quality Standards in

Title 18, Chapter 11 of the Arizona Administrative Code as administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. (Refer to this page 18 of this document.)

4. Excess waste material and construction debris will be disposed of at sites supplied by the contractor in accordance with *Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction* Section 107.11, Protection and Restoration of Property and Landscape (2000 Edition). Disposal will be made at either Municipal Landfills approved under Title D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Construction Debris Landfills approved under Article 3 of the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 49-241 (Aquifer Protection Permit) administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, or Inert Landfills. (Refer to DEA page 48.)
5. Any material sources required for this project outside of the project area shall be examined for environmental effects, by the contractor, prior to use, through a separate environmental analysis in accordance with *Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction*, Section 1001 Material Sources (2000 Edition) (Stored Specification 1001.2 General). (Refer to DEA page 48.)



### **III. ERRATA FROM THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

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During April 2001, the DEA was available for a 30-day public review period at three locations including ADOT Environmental Planning Group (EPG), Phoenix Public Library Yucca Branch, and Phoenix Burton Barr Central Library. The following pages of errata include additions or alterations to clarify, further discuss, or make text corrections to the DEA. These changes are a result of public and agency comments, and are provided below with reference to their pages from the DEA. Sections of the DEA to be deleted are shown as ~~strikeout~~ text, and additions to the DEA text are *italicized*.

#### **UNIVERSAL CHANGES TO DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

All references to "preferred" alternative should be changed to "selected" alternative. All references to "would" in connection with the selected alternative should be changed to "will" including the description of the alternative and associated design features, and the affected environment and environmental consequences. In addition, all references to "would" in connection with the contractors responsibilities should be changed to "shall".

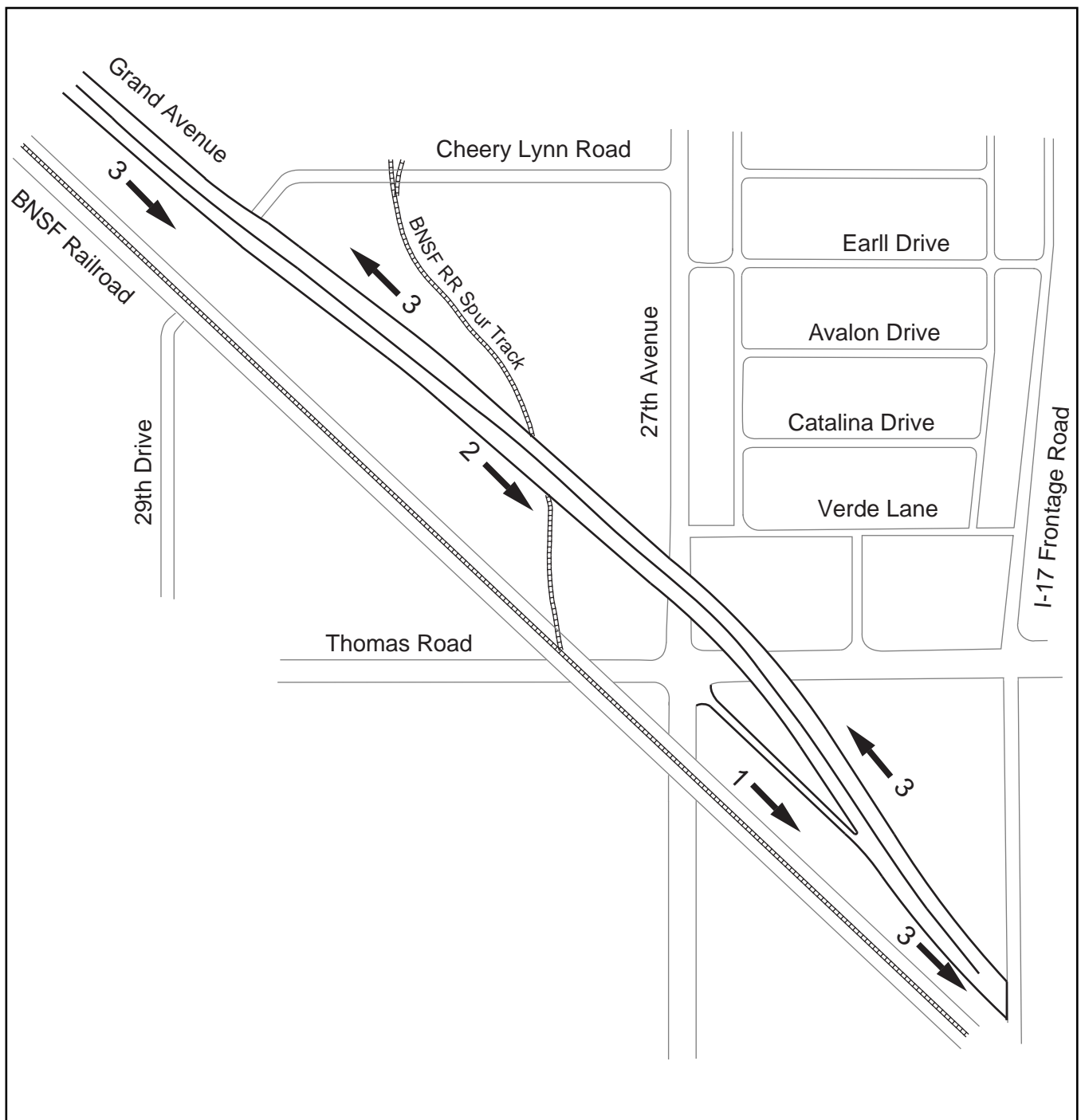
#### **II. Alternatives Considered**

**Figures 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10** (DEA pages 7, 9, 11, and 13.)

Verde Lane west of 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue has been revised to connect to the Interstate 17 (I-17) frontage road. (Refer to pages 7-12 of this document.)

**Figure 11. Alternative 8: Grand Avenue Overpass** (DEA page 16.)

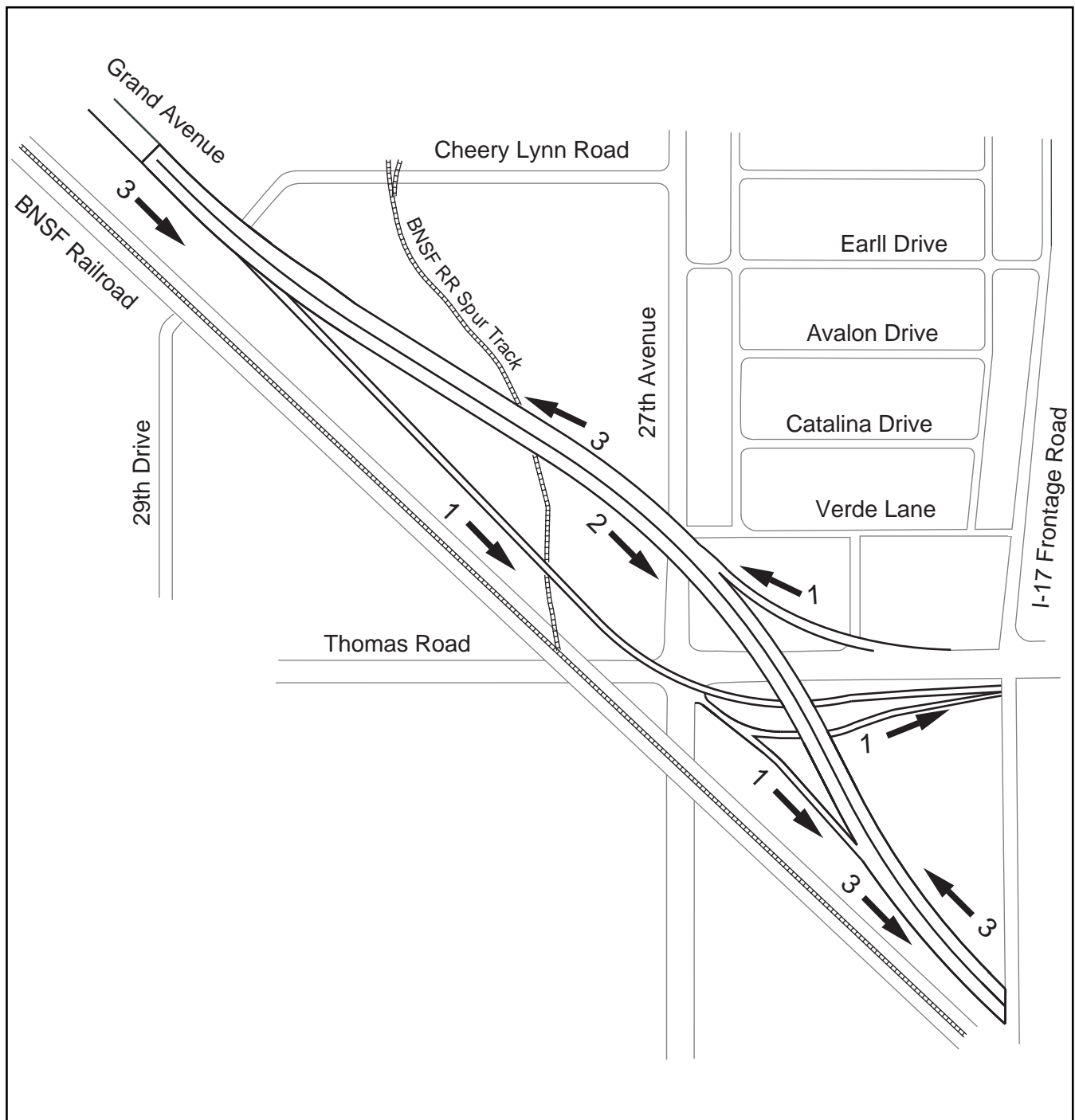
Verde Lane has been revised to be open west of 26<sup>th</sup> Drive. In addition, the right-of-way line from the alley directly south of the residences has been revised to include a full take of four residences. (Refer to page 13 of this document.)



#### Key

- ➔ Direction of Travel
- 3 Number of Thru Lanes

Figure 5. Alternative 2: MIS Option 4 (eliminated)

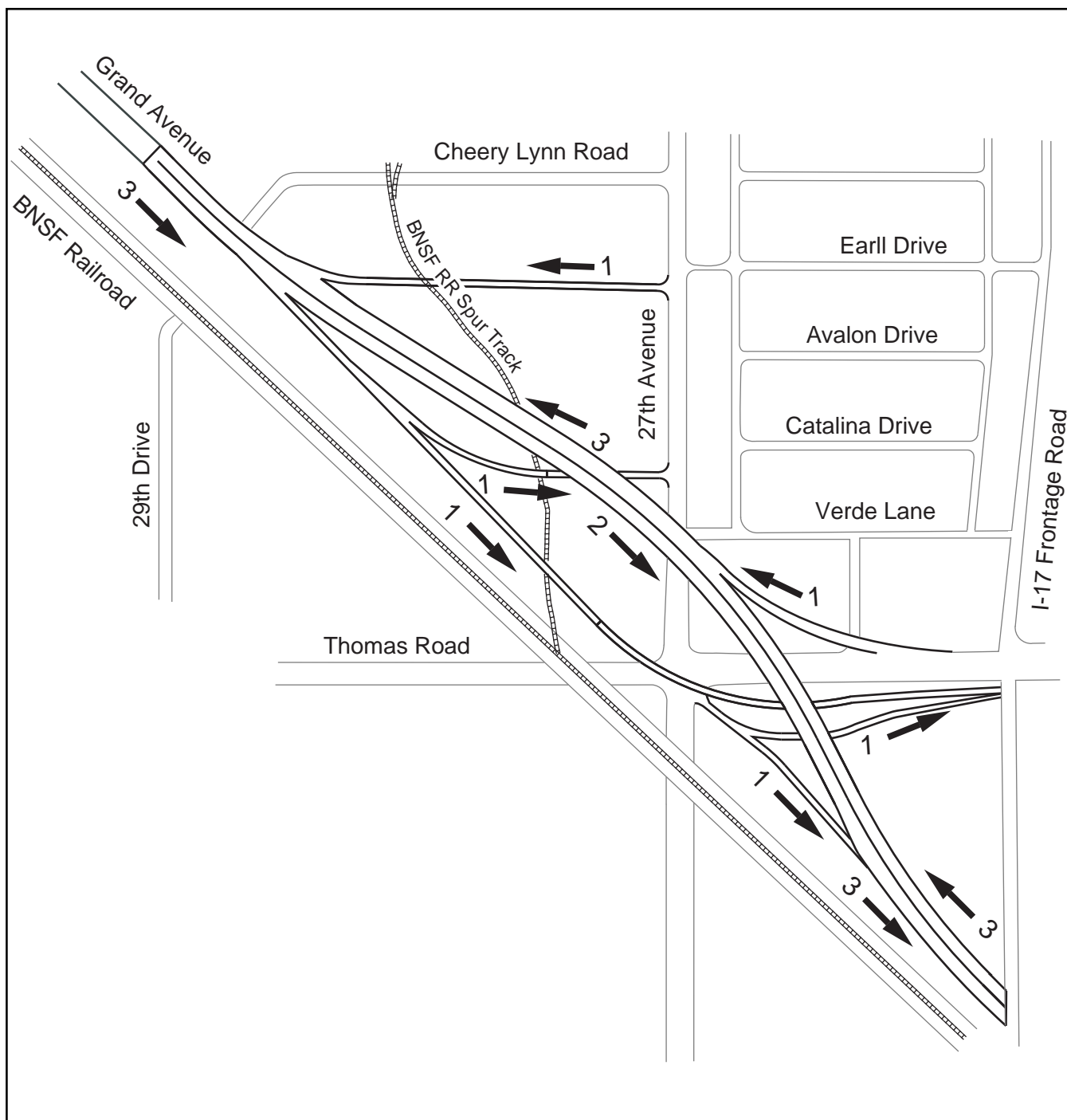


#### Key

➔ Direction of Travel

3 Number of Thru Lanes

Figure 6. Alternative 3: Thomas Road Flyovers (eliminated)

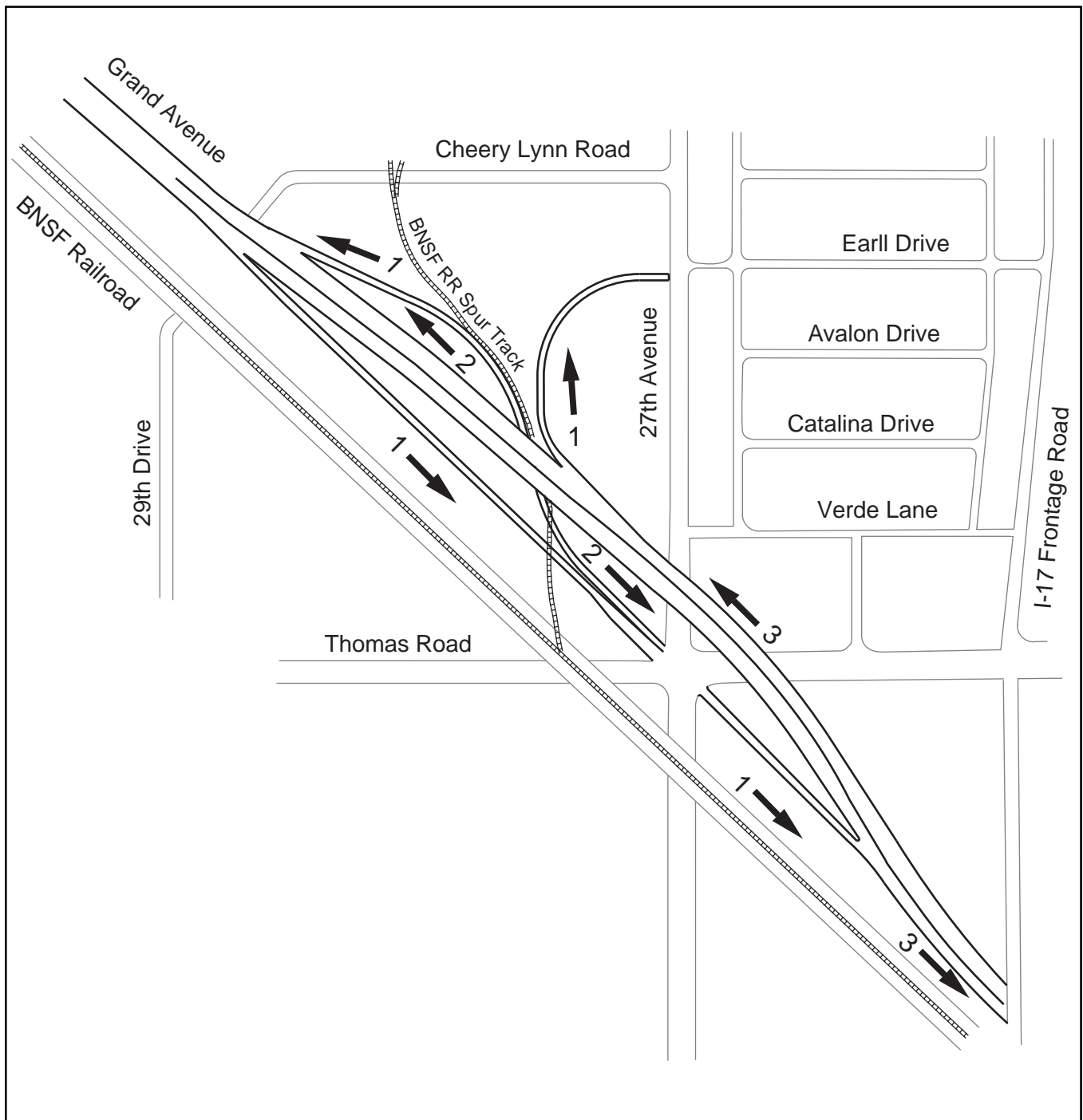


#### Key

➔ Direction of Travel

3 Number of Thru Lanes

Figure 7. Alternative 4: Thomas Road Flyovers and 27th Avenue Ramps (eliminated)



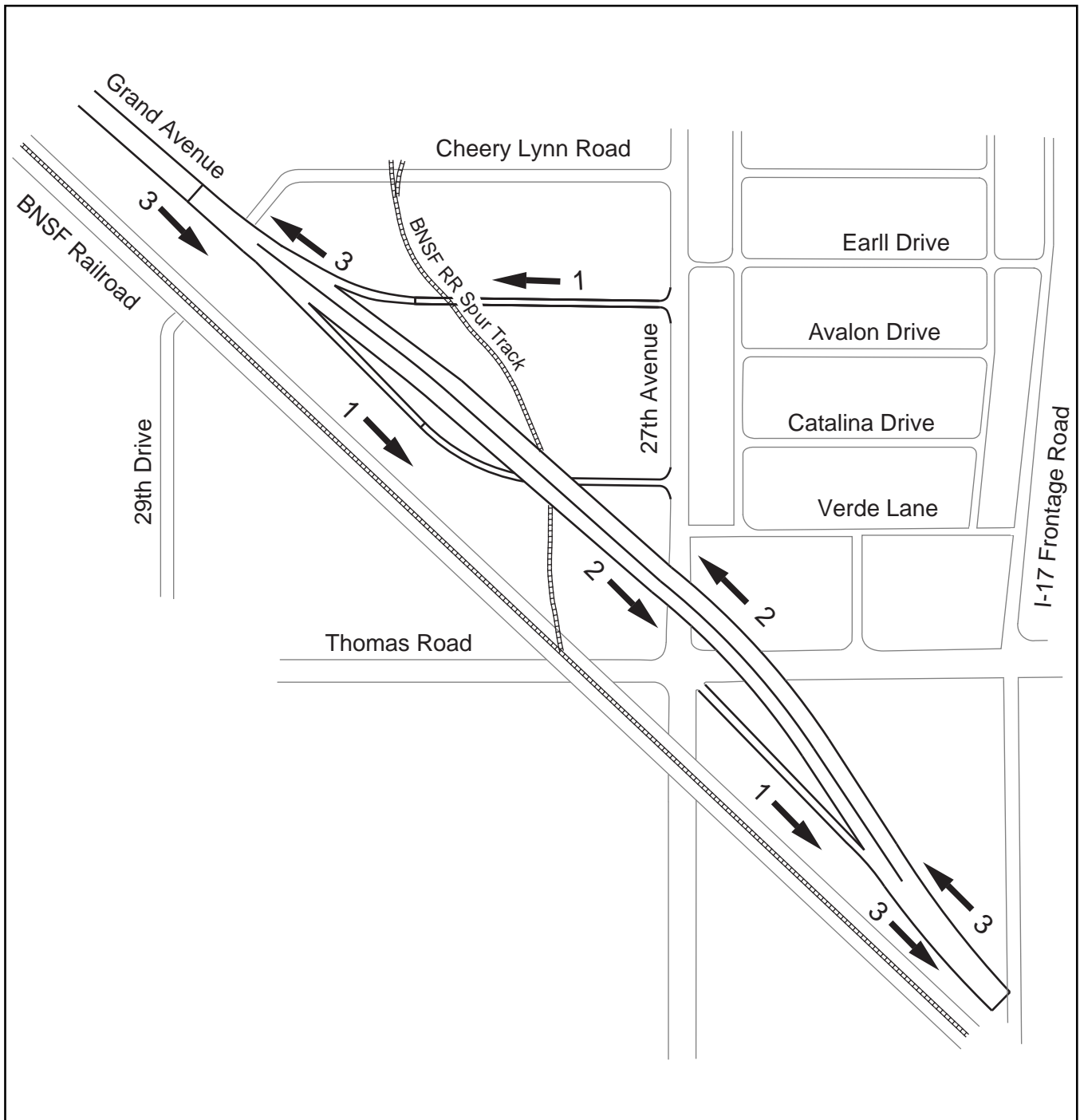
# Key

➔ Direction of Travel

3 Number of Thru Lanes

Figure 8. Alternative 5: MIS Option 5 With Northwest-Bound Off-Ramp (eliminated)



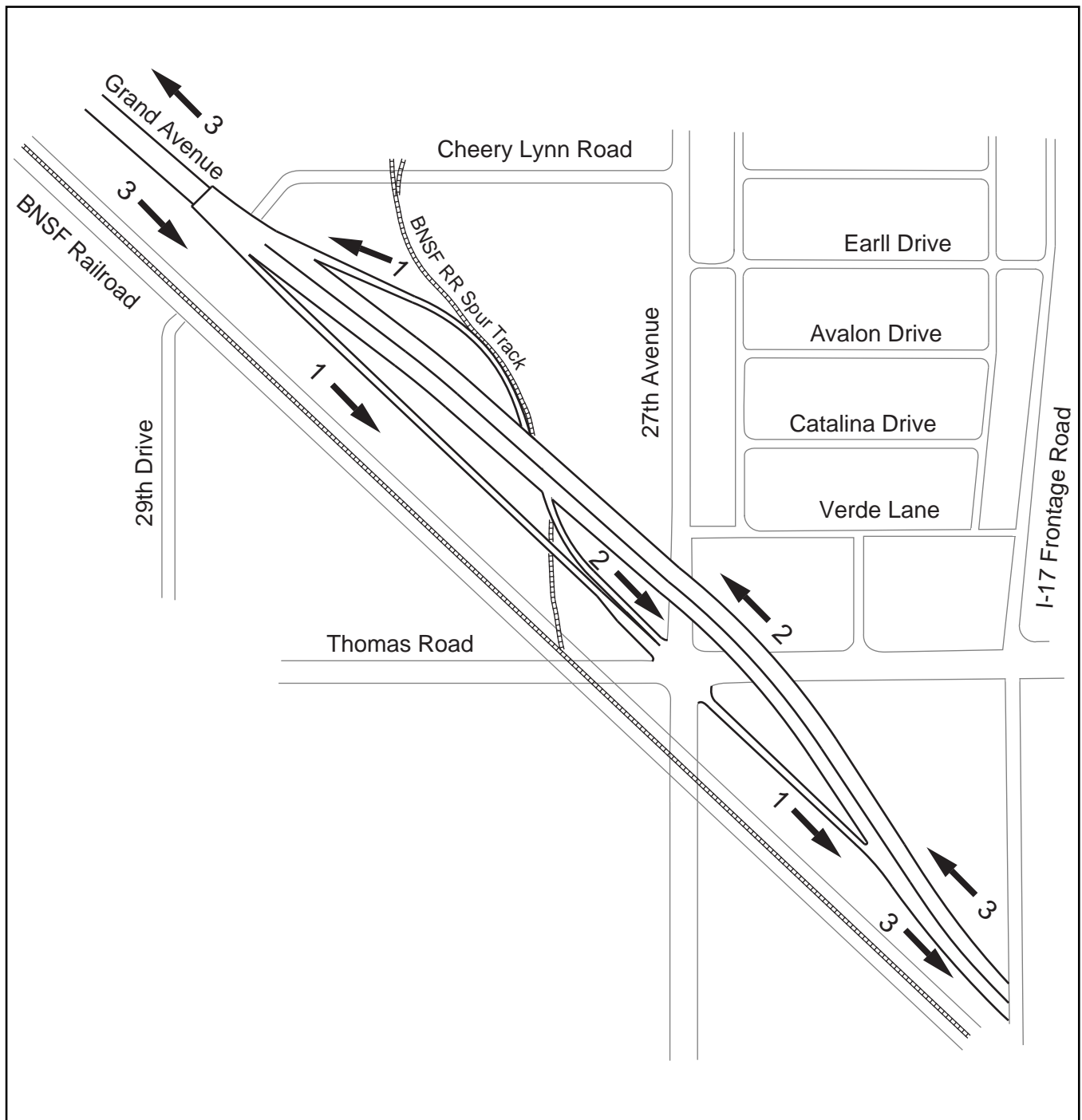


#### Key

➔ Direction of Travel

3 Number of Thru Lanes

Figure 9. Alternative 6: 27th Avenue Ramps (eliminated)



#### Key

→ Direction of Travel

3 Number of Thru Lanes

Figure 10. Alternative 7: MIS Option 5 (eliminated)



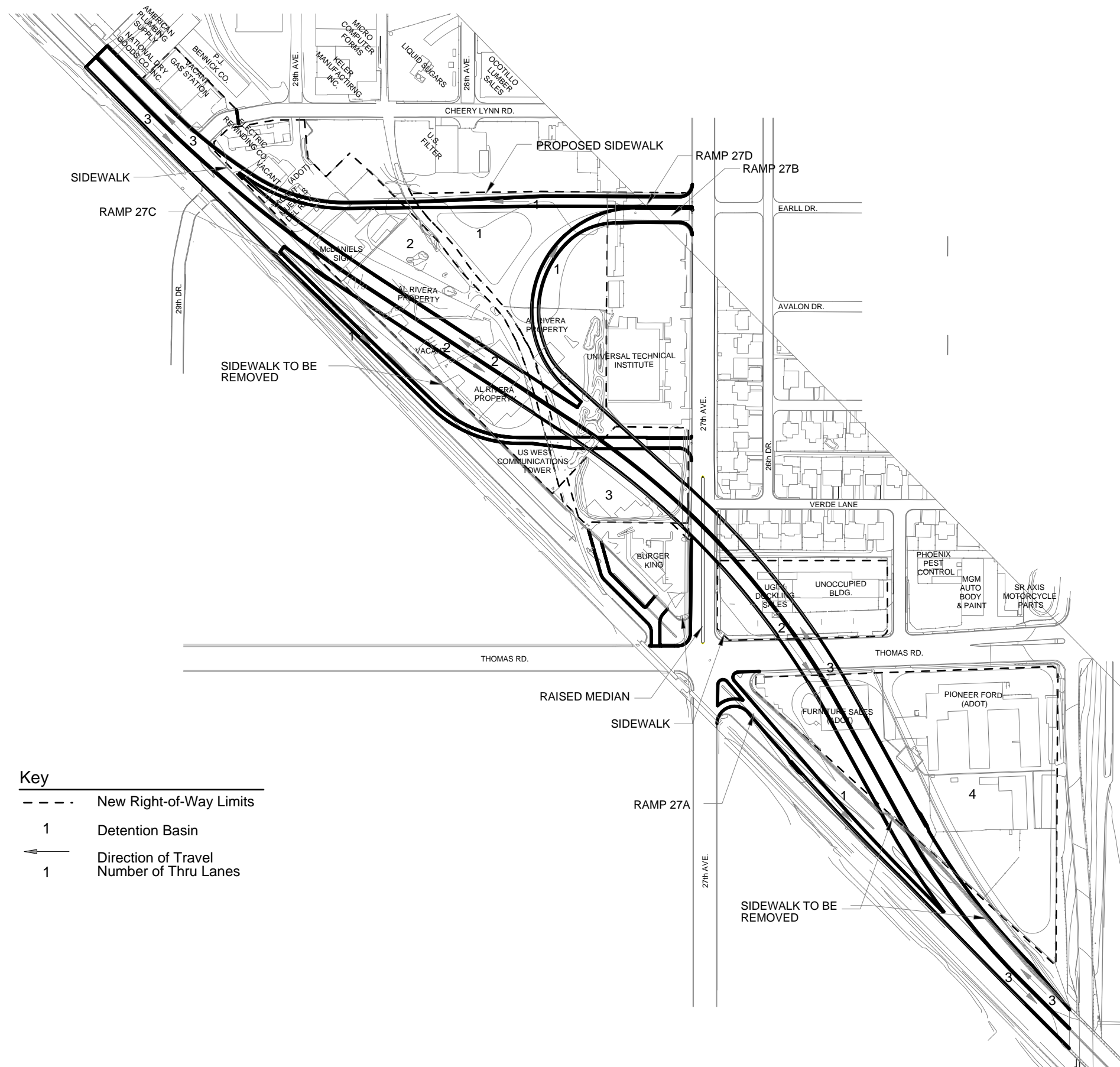


Figure 11. Alternative 8: Grand Avenue Overpass (preferred alternative)



### III. Design Features of the Preferred *Selected* Roadway Improvements

ADOT has identified Alternative 8 from the DEA as the selected alternative. Based on comments received from local jurisdictions and the general public, minor changes have been made to the selected alternative. ADOT will add a raised median between north and southbound traffic lanes on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue to prevent left-turn movements onto Verde Lane. In addition, the westbound right turn lane from Thomas Road to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be extended to provide additional storage capacity for motorists seeking this turning movement. No other substantial modifications have occurred since the selected alternative was presented in the DEA.

#### F. Utilities

(DEA page 20, Fourth Paragraph) APS overhead power and Cox Cable aboveground lines along the north side of Thomas Road and the east side of 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue ~~would~~ *will* be relocated. The Southwest Gas distribution lines and ADOT storm drains located in Grand Avenue ~~would~~ *will* be removed. The contractor ~~would~~ *shall* provide notice to utility customers prior to any disruption of service, ~~if applicable~~.

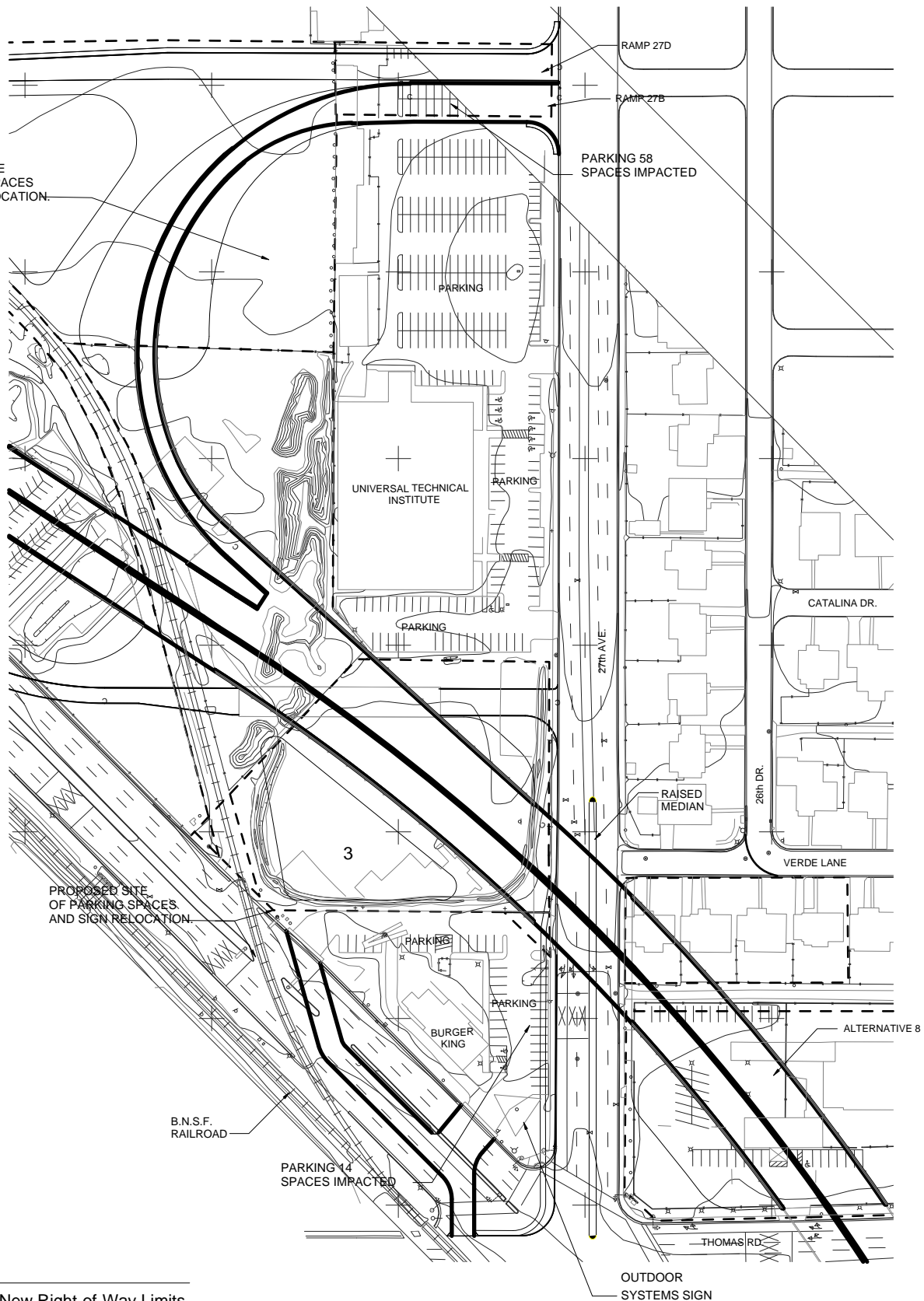
#### C. Right of Way

(DEA page 18, Second Paragraph) Because 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue ~~would~~ *will* need to be widened to the west to accommodate a right turn lane, two through lanes, dual left turn lanes, 14 parking spaces at the Burger King, and the location of the Outdoor Systems sign ~~would~~ *will* need to be acquired for right-of-way. In addition, as a result of the proposed northwest-bound off-ramp location, Universal Technical Institute ~~would~~ *will* lose 58 parking spaces (refer to Figure 12). Details of the parking space replacement mitigation and access changes to Burger King (*2710 Northwest Grand Avenue*) and Universal Technical Institute (*3002 North 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue*) ~~would~~ *will* be evaluated and made available during the final project design phase.

#### Figure 12. UTI and Burger King Parking Relocation Details (DEA page 19.)

Verde Lane will not be closed west of 26<sup>th</sup> Drive. In addition, the right-of-way line from the alley directly south of the residences includes a full take of four residences. (Refer to page 15 of this document.)

PROPOSED SITE  
OF PARKING SPACES  
AND SIGN RELOCATION.



### Key

--- New Right-of-Way Limits

1 Detention Basin

Figure 12. UTI and Burger King Parking Relocation Detail



## IV. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

### D. Cultural Resources

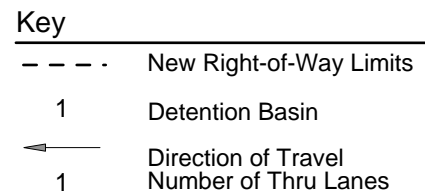
(DEA page 36, Fourth Paragraph) Two archaeological sites (one prehistoric and one historic), eleven structures, four canals, and two historic transportation alignments have been identified within the project area. A large prehistoric Hohokam village site (Las Colinas) is partly located within the proposed construction limits of the Grand Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road project. The site would be impacted during construction. Portions of this site have been tested and excavated prior to construction/improvements to I-10 in the 1980's. At that time Las Colinas was eligible for inclusion on the NRHP. The Class III Pedestrian Survey and cultural report for this project recommends the portion of Las Colinas within the proposed project area eligible for inclusion on the NRHP under Criterion D. ~~Because the proposed project would impact the site, ADOT would complete archaeological site testing, and data recovery (if necessary) prior to construction as indicated in the Programmatic Agreement (PA) described below.~~ The historic archaeological site consists of a group of concrete slabs, and is recommended not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP.

(DEA page 37, Second Paragraph) The PA ensures that ~~ADOT and~~ FHWA adheres to all laws as defined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 800.14 ~~(1) (b) (v)~~.

(DEA page 37, Third Paragraph) According to *Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, Section 107.06 Archaeological Features Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public* (2000 Edition) (*Stored Specification 107.05 Archaeological Features*) If previously unidentified cultural resources are ~~discovered~~ encountered during construction activity related to the construction of the project, the contractor ~~would~~ *shall* stop work immediately at that location *and shall* take all reasonable steps to secure the preservation of those ~~features~~ resources and notify the ADOT Engineer. *The Engineer will contact the Environmental Planning Group immediately and make arrangements for the proper treatment of those resources.* ADOT ~~would~~ *will*, in turn, notify the appropriate agency(ies) to evaluate the significance of the resource.

### F. Air Quality

(DEA page 40, First Paragraph) In addition, the contractor ~~would~~ *shall* be responsible for obtaining any necessary asbestos permits for demolition of any structures, ~~if applicable.~~



Grand Avenue (US 60) 27th Avenue/Thomas Road Draft Environmental Assessment  
Federal Project No. AC-NH-060-B-(2) TRACS No. 060 MA 160 H5137 01C

## G. Noise

### Figure 18. Noise Receptors and Monitor Sites (DEA page 42.)

Figure 18 has been revised to indicate that Verde Lane will not be closed just west of 26<sup>th</sup> Drive. In addition, the right-of-way line from the alley directly south of the residences will include a full take of four residences instead of three. All references to the selected alternative's noise walls should be changed to read sound walls. (Refer to page 18 of this document.)

## H. Landscape/Vegetation Removal/~~Noxious Weeds~~ *Invasive Species* (DEA page 45.)

(DEA page 45, Fifth Paragraph) ~~In accordance with Executive Order 13112, a survey of the project area was completed and no noxious weeds were found to occur. In order to prevent the introduction of noxious weeds, all earth-moving and hauling equipment would be washed prior to entering the construction site. Therefore, the proposed project or actions associated with the mobilization of equipment to construct these proposed improvement would not contribute to the spread of noxious weeds.~~

*In accordance with Executive Order 13112, the project area was surveyed by a qualified invasive species authority, and it was determined that there are no listed invasive species within the project boundaries. Therefore, this project will not result in the spread of invasive species. In order to prevent the introduction of invasive species, all earth-moving and hauling equipment shall be washed at the contractor's storage facility prior to arriving on site to prevent the introduction of invasive species seed.*

## K. Visual Resources

(DEA page 47, First Paragraph) This structure may detract from the visual character and quality because it would be approximately 25 40 feet above ground at its highest point and visible from the residential area.

## M. Water Resources, Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

(DEA page 48, First Paragraph) Because 5 or more acres of land ~~would~~ *will* be disturbed, a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit ~~would~~ *will* be required. ~~The ADOT Roadside~~

~~Development Section would determine who would prepare the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan. The Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan will be prepared by the designer prior to construction.~~ The District Construction Office ~~would~~ *will* submit the Notice of Intent and the Notice of Termination to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and copies to the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. A Notice of Intent ~~would~~ *will* be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency at least 48 hours prior to the start of construction.

(DEA page 48, Second Paragraph) ~~During construction, care will be taken to ensure that construction materials are handled~~ *During construction, the contractor shall give special attention to the effect of its operations upon the landscape and shall take special care to maintain natural surroundings undamaged in accordance with Arizona Department of Transportation Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction Section 104.09 (2000 Edition) and the Water Quality Standards in Title 18, Chapter 11 of the Arizona Administrative Code as administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality.*

## **N. Materials Sources**

(DEA page 48) The estimated quantity of fill materials required for this project is 252,000 cubic yards. The construction of the four detention basins ~~would~~ *will* provide the estimated fill. If additional fill is required, Detention Basin No. 1 may be deepened to accommodate the fill requirements. ~~Any material sources required for this project outside of the project area would be examined for environmental effects, by the contractor, prior to use, through a separate environmental analysis. The contractor would comply with the Arizona Department of Transportation Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, Section 1001 Material Sources (2000 Edition).~~ *Any material sources required for this project outside of the project area shall be examined for environmental effects, by the contractor, prior to use, through a separate environmental analysis in accordance with Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, Section 1001 Material Sources (2000 Edition) (Stored Specification 1001.2 General).*

## **O. Construction Debris Disposal**

(DEA page 48) ~~Excess waste material and construction debris would be disposed of sites supplied by the contractor. Disposal would be made at either Municipal Landfills approved under Title D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Construction Debris Landfills approved under Article 3 of the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 49-241 (Aqua Protection Permit) administered by ADEQ, or Inert Landfills.~~ *Excess waste material and construction debris will be disposed of at*

*sites supplied by the contractor in accordance with Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction Section 107.11, Protection and Restoration of Property and Landscape (2000 Edition). Disposal will be made at either Municipal Landfills approved under Title D of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Construction Debris Landfills approved under Article 3 of the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 49-241 (Aquifer Protection Permit) administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, or Inert Landfills.*

## **P. Hazardous Materials**

(DEA page 49) According to Arizona Department of Transportation's Standard Specifications for Road and Bridge Construction, Section 107 Legal Relations and Responsibility to Public (2000 Edition) (Stored Specification 107HAZMT, 01/15/93), if previously unidentified or suspected hazardous materials are encountered during construction, work ~~would~~ *shall* stop cease at that location and the ADOT Engineer ~~would~~ *shall* be contacted to arrange for proper assessment, treatment, or disposal of those materials. Such locations ~~would~~ *will* be investigated and proper action implemented prior to the continuation of work in that location.

## **VI. Public Involvement and Agency Coordination**

### ***Public Hearing***

*Summary of Public Hearing and Comments* (New section to be located at the end of VI. Public Involvement and Agency Coordination, Section B. Public Involvement, DEA page 58)

*The 30-day comment period for the DEA began on April 9, 2001, and ended on May 11, 2001. Copies of the DEA were available for review at Burton Barr Central Library and Phoenix Public Library Yucca Branch, and ADOT's EPG office. An advertisement announcing the availability of the DEA and the public hearing was placed in The Arizona Republic newspaper on April 9, 2001. Comments on the DEA were received by letters, on written comment forms issued by ADOT at the public hearing, and through oral comments transcribed by the court reporter in attendance at the hearing. The comments made and the responses to those comments are available for public review at ADOT's EPG.*

*Thirty-seven people attended the public hearing. Project plans were on display for the public to review. The hearing began in an open house format followed by a brief presentation on the proposed preferred alternative and a description of the potential environmental impacts disclosed in the DEA. The presentation was given by the ADOT EPG representative and the respective project consultant*

representatives. Immediately following the presentation, the floor was opened to the public to provide a question-and-answer session. At the conclusion of the question-and-answer session, the hearing returned to an open house format where project representatives were available to explain the preferred alternative and answer questions. A description of the proposed action was also provided in a handout with a comment sheet attached to be returned either at the hearing or by mail. Twelve people commented either through the court reporter, including during the open-floor question-and-answer session, and/or completed comment forms provided at the public hearing. An additional four comments from the general public and interested agencies were received after the public hearing.

Approximately 90% of all written or transcribed comments stated concerns and issues with respect to the project. Specific concerns regarding the proposed project included the following: potential cut-through traffic into the neighborhood northeast of the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road traffic intersection, visual impacts from the Grand Avenue grade-separation overpass, potential access changes to a remaining business located at 2950 Grand Avenue, noise impacts both during and after construction, air quality impacts during construction, and landscaping and maintenance of both the detention basins and areas around the overpass and/or ramp structures. Those who supported the project identified that there was a need to reduce congestion at the intersection of 43<sup>d</sup> Avenue, Camelback Road, and Grand Avenue.

### Public Comments

**Comment:** The latest proposal for the overpass of Grand Avenue is contrary to the previous one when ADOT and the engineers had agreed and had preliminary drawings to close Verde Lane at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue to help alleviate our cut-through traffic. The current design, while improving the traffic on Grand Avenue, is not doing anything to improve the lifestyle of the people on Verde Lane from 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. That needs to be addressed as the four houses that will be left on Verde Lane are going to have this monstrosity of an overpass overhanging their homes. So not only will we have to put up with a limited view out of our existing back yards, but we'll still have to tolerate excessive traffic down our street. That's an excess of 600 cars an hour at rush hour at 5:00 to 6:00 p.m. No left turns onto Verde Lane is very minor improvement, less than 5 percent by my estimate. The City of Pheonix needs to close Verde Lane at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Response:** ADOT recognizes that even though the proposed roadway improvements have been designed to minimize cut-through traffic from 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and



*Thomas Road into the neighborhood along 26<sup>th</sup> Drive and Verde Lane, that all neighborhood traffic conflicts may not be resolved by the construction of this project. The primary reason or need for commuting motorists to search for alternate routes around the existing six-legged intersection has been a direct result of the delay durations at this intersection. It is not uncommon for motorists to experience a nearly 4-minute delay during peak hour travel. With the construction of a Grand Avenue grade-separation overpass, traffic delays are anticipated to be reduced by nearly 70 percent. This should help minimize the need to seek alternate routes around the intersection. In addition, the right turn lane from westbound Thomas Road will be extended back to 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue to increase the storage capacity for motorists seeking this right-turn movement to northbound 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. A raised median will be constructed on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road traffic intersection to approximately Earll Drive. This median will prevent left-turn movements from southbound 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue onto Verde Lane.*

*ADOT has evaluated all reasonable and feasible measures to mitigate the visual impacts related to the overpass structure when viewing from the neighborhood northeast of the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road traffic intersection. The structure will have a standard rustication with vertical striations in the concrete and stained a tan color. All embankment slopes, detention basins, and earthen areas will be landscaped.*

*Comment:*

*First off, thank you for mailing the April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2001, meeting information, since I was unable to attend. It appears to have no changes from the last meeting, so my concerns with this design are the same as before. Mostly for the safety of our customers turning into our entrance from the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue ramp setting down on Grand with only 110 feet from our property line. Also in rush hour and heavy traffic times the cars on Grand will have to cut over and dodge the vehicles setting down from the ramp in a very short distance. Customers going southeast on Grand will no longer have the option of turning around and heading northwest at Cheery Lynn or turning left at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue.*

*Response:*

*Access will be provided to businesses and residences within and adjacent to the project area. Some movements may be difficult during peak traffic times such as evening or morning. Because the project's overall reduction in delay times at the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road traffic intersection will be nearly 70 percent, project area-wide delay times and congestion will be*

*improved on and adjacent to Grand Avenue. Any substantial access changes to project area businesses were identified by ADOT and the businesses were evaluated for compensation, removal, and/or relocation in compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act, as amended in 1987.*

*Comment: 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue should connect Indian School Road and Grand Avenue directly, bridging the canal.*

*Response: This issue was not evaluated as part of this project because it is located outside of the project limits.*

*Comment: Bus stop(s) should be in the shade of the overpass.*

*Response: Bus stop locations will be evaluated and coordinated with the City of Phoenix and Regional Public Transit Authority to facilitate the effective and efficient transfer of passengers.*

*Comment: Try to eliminate sudden drop-off on 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue south of railroad tracks. On-coming traffic is difficult to see when turning left from southbound 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue onto eastbound Thomas Road.*

*Response: No improvements south of the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road intersection were evaluated as a part of this project because that portion is located outside of the project area.*

*Comment: Why not run Thomas Road over Grand Avenue and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue?*

*Response: This concept was evaluated by ADOT. Because the proximity of I-17 to the east and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe spur track to the west, there was insufficient distances to bring a grade-separation structure back to existing grade.*

*Comment: There was no mention of noise from the traffic.*

*Response: Noise impacts were evaluated and identified by ADOT. This evaluation indicated that the proposed project will impact a number of residences northeast of the 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road intersection. ADOT will construct a 7-foot-high sound wall along the northern side of the Grand Avenue grade separation to minimize these impacts. This wall will be constructed along the entire length of the mainline structure for an approximate length of 2,000 feet. ADOT will also construct an 8-foot wall*

*south of and parallel to Verde Lane within the proposed ADOT right-of-way. The sound walls will effectively reduce noise impacts to residences north of Verde Lane by 2-3 decibels (to levels below 64 decibels). Additionally, ADOT will also use asphaltic rubber as the primary roadway surface across the grade-separation structure in lieu of the preferred concrete surface to provide some additional noise reduction commonly attributed to cement surfaces. Noise impacts from construction-related activities will be short-term.*

*Comment: General concern noted with respect to air quality during construction.*

*Response: Potential air quality issues were identified in the EA. Short-term changes in atmospheric carbon monoxide levels could occur from typical construction-related traffic slowing, but are not anticipated to be above acceptable levels. Short-term impacts to particulate matter levels as a result of construction will be mitigated by the use of standard watering or other industry-acceptable dust control measures. In addition, potential impacts due to construction activities will be mitigated by the enforcement of Maricopa County Rule 310 regarding fugitive dust emissions and Maricopa County Rule 360 regarding new source performance standards. All improvements were found to comply with the Transportation Improvement Program for ADOT's Fiscal Year 2001-2005, which also conforms to the State Implementation Plan and the Federal Implementation Plan as regulated by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.*

*Comment: General concern for residential property value from post-construction maintenance of facilities (i.e. detention basins, streets).*

*Response: All detention basins, embankment slopes, and affected public right-of-way not used to provide access to utilities and/or as a utility corridor will be landscaped and covered with decomposed granite. Trees will be planted to screen the detention basins from the view of passing motorists. The City of Phoenix has agreed to take responsibility for maintaining the landscaping following construction.*

*Comment: The proposal plan for Grand Avenue at 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road sounds good. I would like to recommend that all intersections be eliminated so that Grand Avenue would become a free-flowing expressway with limited entry/exit access. Also, Grand Avenue should have special ramp*

connections with Interstate 10, Interstate 17, and Loop 101 to provide non-stop travel. I like the idea of selecting a surface street to allow limited entry/exit access traffic from Grand Avenue. This is a plan that would best allow traffic to move uninterrupted on Grand Avenue. In addition, it would be even a better idea to make the entries and exits more symmetrical. It is very important that we have Grand Avenue as a non-stop expressway to serve travelers that wish to reach the Downtown Phoenix area.

*Response:* This expressway concept has been studied dating back to the Grand Avenue Corridor Study in 1996 in which both ADOT and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) participated. ADOT followed this effort with the Grand Avenue Major Investment Study which ended in January 1999. This study evaluated and recommended transportation improvements for the entire Grand Avenue corridor. Project objectives included eliminating six-legged intersections, eliminating railroad crossings where feasible, and improving regional mobility. ADOT's efforts to construct a total of seven grade-separation structures and complete the Grand Avenue connection to the Agua Fria is a continued effort as part of those previous studies.

#### Agency Comments

During the 30-day public review and comment period, one written comment was received from MAG. No other comments were received from participating or interested agencies.

*Comment:* Our principal comment is to note that regional plans and priorities for all major facilities are currently undergoing review as part of the development of the new Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The currently approved Long Range Transportation Plan calls for Grand Avenue to ultimately be a controlled access expressway. The ultimate concept could change as the new RTP is developed. In the interim, the plans for the grade separation at this intersection should address the regional plan concept for an expressway for this section of Grand Avenue.

*Response:* Utilizing Grand Avenue as the arterial to be designed as a grade-separation structure passing over both 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Thomas Road is consistent with this expressway concept comment. This concept has been studied dating back to the Grand Avenue Corridor Study in 1996 in which both ADOT and MAG participated.